

Lounger's Miscellany.

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*Est modus in rebus; sunt certi denique fines,
Quos ultra, citraque nequit confinare rectum.*

HOR. SAT. i. l. 106.

*Some certain mean in all things may be found,
To mark our virtues, or our vices bound.*

FRANCIS.

THERE ARE a number of worthy good kind of people in their moral character, that have certain odd tricks, ill-habits, and mistaken notions, in which they think their whole happiness is centred, and which they endeavour to preserve with the strictest fidelity, lest their fame should die away with the decrease of their Quixotism. Men possessed of these singularities assume a dictatorial method of addressing themselves on all occasions; they cannot descend to make themselves agreeable to the company, but suppose the company collected for them; they cannot speak with the mild enticing voice of a man of breeding, but their words are uttered with the asperity of a plowman, obstinate through ignorance, and offensive through incivility. No question can be put, or opinion offered, but the conversation is interrupted by some one of these boisterous gentry, who make no scruple of putting a flat negative to every

every thing that is proposed, be the subject ever so trivial, or the truth ever so apparent. A set of ideas, entirely different from those of the rest of mankind, keep their attention fixed with such a degree of profundity, that unless we were previously acquainted with their character, we might be apt to extol them more highly than they deserved, and set them down as *Genii* of a superior order.

FAULTS like these, for faults they must be termed, proceed from various causes, but more particularly two, viz. the pride of being thought more learned than other people; and the fear of being marked for men without sentiment. Such conceptions are notoriously false, and have their origin in ignorance and absurdity. There is certainly a wide difference between free-will and compulsion, dissent and contradiction. A man begins an argument upon any topic he pleases, and endeavours to support it in the best manner he is able; another objects to his opinion, and the grounds on which the arguments were founded, striving in his turn to subvert his adversary's positions, in order to give validity to his own: in this case, the one cannot be said to have any ill-natured motive in dissenting from the other, if he had, it might very properly be termed contradiction; he merely states the original proposition, and in a genteel way produces his own ideas on the subject, neither fervently assenting through fear, nor dissenting through a spirit of contradiction.

WERE people to be in general of this erroneous way of thinking, all human intercourse must be at an end immediately: the comforts arising from a familiar exchange of sentiment, than which no blessing can be greater when the parties are knit in friendship, must instantly vanish from our embrace, and be seized on by perpetual discord; father, friend and brother would be terms as little known as places beyond the seas as yet undiscovered.

BESIDES these sort of people that are singular in the respects above related, there are others who are noted for peculiarities in their dress. To exceed the bounds of reason in this, as well as every other particular, is certainly deserving of censure: when the mean is not attentively observed, but actions are kept either above or below par, the extremes are so glaring as to prevent their remaining unnoticed.

The



The name of *old square-toes* is at the tongue's end of every schoolboy in the kingdom, as a word of reproach to those old fashioned fellows, who pride themselves more in keeping up the customs of their own day, than in following the improvements of these modern times. It will be needless to give a tedious detail of the forms of the dresses, or the manner of wearing them peculiar to our forefathers ; it will be sufficient if the reader be referred to " The Rudiments of gentle Behaviour, by the late Monsieur F. Nivelon," where he will find half a dozen plates describing every *minutiae* of dress he can possibly want, viz. bob wigs and tie wigs, long tail'd wigs and short tail'd wigs, spring wigs and winter wigs, and the wig called the Ramillie wig : and that this work may not be defective in any part, the fair sex are depicted with their long waisted stays and figured stomachers, depriving them of all the elegance of shape for which our modern ladies are so universally admired.

Of all the unfortunate fashions, the head-dress seems to have been the worst ; for in opposition to the bombastic fullbottomed periwig of the husband, the wife's head was shorn, and appeared in just such a state of preparation as a head must be before it be fitted to the concavity of a *transparent* *stele*.

THE moderns have been amply abused for exuberance in dress, such as slashed sleeves and slashed pockets ; but the ancients had their defects and extravagancies as well as ourselves. Who can admire the rollers at the knees, as unnatural in appearance as a white swelling ? or who can assign a reason for so many buttons and button-holes on the flaps of the waistcoat ? Such additions are not only useless, but far from ornamental, as may be seen immediately on comparing an ancient hunk with a modern beau, characters that are frequently exhibited on the stage.

SEVERAL varieties of men may be brought forth to view, as equally distinguishable on other accounts as these are for their oddities in dress. In the article of economy particularly, we see people abusing it daily, and instead of curtailing superfluities, which is the proper economy, niggardly debarring themselves and their friends of the common comforts and necessaries of life. Their tables are well spread with dainties of different kinds, but each dish is so sparingly

sparingly filled, that if more than two persons were to fix upon the same, the rest must go without. Now, if instead of this ostentatious plan, another of greater utility had been chosen, the tables would be reversed, and a few dishes well filled would be preferred to a number barely covered at the bottom.

A WORTHY gentleman of my acquaintance, who shall be nameless for very particular reasons, retains to this day the customs which necessity at first made him put in practice. He was the second son of a third son, and of course born to a very scanty fortune; on this account he deemed it better to follow that course of life wherein his principal would bring him the greatest interest, without subjecting him to the disagreeable necessity of living unemployed. A pair of colours, as the term is, being to be disposed of, Jack set out from his father's villa post haste to the agent in town, of whom he instantly on his arrival made the purchase. Regimentals were procured, and six new ruffled shirts to supply the place of his old ones, which were nearly, *a la Françoise*, reduced to the mere well starched chitterling, neither body nor sleeves being better than tatters. Leave of absence was granted him for a few months, to get him instructed in military phrases, and teach him the discipline of the drill, after which he was to pack up his alls and join the regiment. The necessary instructions being given him, and the time allowed him having elapsed, our hero retired into winter quarters. Here he lived more gaily than he had ever done before, attending all the subscription assemblies in the place, and escorting the girls to the parish church; in short, a greater beau was not to be seen. One day after mess, while the bottle was circulating pretty freely, the conversation chanced to fall upon the excellencies of œconomy, and each strove to shew his superiority over the other in the practical part of the art. Jack having attentively listened to the discourse of his brother soldiers, prided himself in being able to appear as a gentleman with only six shirts, and asserted, that after all their boasting, there was no one present who had so few. To his great mortification, however, he was completely set down by an Irish gentleman in the corner, who roundly asserted in his turn, that he had never had more than four in his life, one of which lasted him three days, without

without being obliged to change it. "Sir, I have a peculiar method
" of my own, which is unknown to any man present but myself,
" of stiffening and beautifying the frill and ruffles of a shirt, and
" if you will give me a bottle of good claret, by St. Patrick ! I will
" disclose it." It was not till this moment, that any one of the
company, the Irishman excepted, could boast of knowing what
strict œconomy was. Such a fund of knowledge was disclosed, on
the gentleman's bringing down his trunk, as served honest Jack
and his companions from that day to this, for they are all now the
strictest œconomists in England. Every eye being fixed on the
orator, as he pulled out his treasures, he respectfully bowed, and
delivered himself to this effect.

" GENTLEMEN and brother soldiers ! you are all well persuaded
" that it behoves every man to live within the limits of his fortune.
" The good effects of this is likewise not unknown to you. By
" this, the man of small fortune lives free from debt, and he is ena-
" bled to pay every one his due. Like yourselves I am on half pay,
" and unable to raise more money than my rank affords me ; of
" course, necessity has taught me what I am now about to teach
" you. In my right hand you see a box-iron, an instrument with
" which, when heated, I iron my frill and ruffles, after having pre-
" viously whitened them with this piece of chalk which I hold in
" my left." Here the company were all astonishment, till the orator
fixing their attention to the next article, proceeded thus : " The
" things you see before you, gentlemen, are three pair of shoes ; in
" these there is no mystery : each pair is contrived to be higher be-
" hind than the other, by which means, beginning with the lower
" pair first, I contrive to wear my stockings three days successively.
" I need not have mentioned this, for you must have all known it
" before, but I thought it was as well that nothing should pass by
" unexplained. My stock is black, of course one in my life will be
" sufficient. My shoes are fastened with ribbons, which are sup-
" plied by my pig-tail, that is, to speak plainer, whenever I want a
" new ribbon for my tail, the old one does very well for shoe-strings,
" after being well washed in stale beer and gin. For breeches I
" would recommend to your notice a stuff called by the tradesfolks
" Everlasting ;

" Everlasting ; the pair I have the honour to wear is of that quality. And now, gentlemen, having told you all the secrets of my art, I will drink your healths in the bottle of claret."

Such wholesome advice was not thrown away ; it had the desired effect on my friend Jack, who immediately put in practice the rules laid down by the Irishman, and to this moment, though now possessed of a large fortune, and a member of parliament, he cannot for the soul of him change his shirt every day.

To those who may chance to become rich from having experienced the contrary fortune, let me give this piece of instruction—*not to make themselves singular in any respect, but so regulate their actions to their stations, as to shew there is a medium in all things.*

R.

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